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## **Trending this moment: Examining social media platforms as information gatekeepers through Facebook's Trending topics and Twitter's Moments**

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### **Abstract**

For more than a decade, social media platforms have provided networked infrastructures for the flow of news and information. These infrastructures, however, are not neutral in that platforms shape information flows in alignment with their politics (Gillespie, 2010) – business models, competitive strategies, and governing values – which are subsequently realised through their technological architecture. Drawing on emerging frameworks in platform and software studies, I examine two case studies: Facebook's Trending section and Twitter's Moments tab, to recognise how platforms influence information flows relating to breaking news and popular headlines. Using José van Dijck and Thomas Poell's (2013) principles of *social media logic*, I identify how these platforms act as gatekeepers through a combination of authoritative curation and algorithmic personalisation. The resulting social media news landscape steers users toward information exchange within a single platform, bolstering company profits, and favours particular news stories while excluding perspectives represented elsewhere across the web.

Note: This paper was drafted prior to recent events involving media attention to Facebook's Trending section. Its arguments should be considered alongside discussions of these developments, such as:

"Facebook Trending: It's made of people!! (but we should have already known that)" <https://socialmediacollective.org/2016/05/09/facebook-trending-its-made-of-people-but-we-should-have-already-known-that/>

"Algorithms, clickworkers, and the befuddled fury around Facebook Trends" <https://socialmediacollective.org/2016/05/18/facebook-trends/>

It is a typical morning and I am boarding the bus on my way to the university. I have 15 minutes to catch up on the news before arriving at my stop. In line with the Pew Research Center's finding that equally 63% of American Twitter and Facebook users turn to these platforms as a source for news about events and issues (Barthel, Shearer, Gottfried, & Mitchell, 2015), the first thing I do is pull out my iPhone. While in truth, the majority of my news gathering involves mindless scrolling through links posted by others to my feeds, I have noticed platforms' increasing attempts to relay news directly to me.

Although Facebook's Trending section is displayed prominently beside my newsfeed in a browser, I have to tap to the "Search" button to see it in the app. A series of blue "up" arrows lists proper nouns as headlines: North Korea; Dennis Hastert; Mars; Bursa, Turkey; Minecraft; Dyson; Matthew Knowles; Manus Island. I tap on Manus Island – a hot topic I have noted in posts by Australian friends – and immediately a news clip from a local station autoplays. The sound is muted, which is fortunate on the bus, so I read the full headline, "Papua New Guinea to close detention facility on Island, Prime Minister says." The summary beneath goes on to explain, "A day after Papua New Guinea's Supreme Court ruled that Australia's detention of asylum seekers on the island is illegal, Prime Minister Peter O'Neill announced Wednesday the facility is to be closed." A quick scroll autoplays more videos from news channels, shows 'top posts' of news stories from The Guardian and BBC News with hundreds of 'reactions/likes,' and these are followed by an unending stream of what everyone else on Facebook is posting publicly about this topic. After browsing several comments that are shouting their opinions using capslock, I switch to Twitter.

The Moments lightning bolt icon still grabs my attention as something new and shiny among the app's longstanding features. A quick tap to the news category showcases the same topic, this time with the headline, "Detention centre on Manus Island to close down" overlaying a photo of the centre that spans three quarters of my screen. I tap on a 'play' button, I am provided with a summary that is similar – but not identical – to Facebook's and this summary includes a scroll bar beneath. As I swipe left, the scroll bar progresses and I'm presented with related tweets. The first two are from ABC News about the

‘breaking’ story of the closure. Then a tweet from an editor at the Sydney Morning Herald with a link to their article about it, followed by journalist Julia Baird with the PNG Prime Minister’s statement, an ABC journalist with a photo of the statement, the same journalist posting a photo of Australia’s Immigration Minister’s response, a video clip from Sky News Australia, and a couple more journalists’ tweets. Twitter then gives me a checkmark, tells me I am “caught up” and suggests other Moments to peruse.

The bus has arrived and I am now fully equipped with knowledge about today’s most pertinent Australian news story – or am I? What remains in my mind is the two-line summary alongside a couple of strong opinions from journalists and capslock users. But where are these people from and what makes their version of the news trustworthy, let alone worth our attention? Why did Facebook show me articles from international sources while Twitter focused on Australian news outlets? I am ‘caught up’ but how could I possibly form an opinion or take an action based on what I have just seen? This paper examines Facebook’s Trending section and Twitter’s Moments to develop an understanding of how platforms guide users’ experiences of encountering news and information through social media. Walking through the technical aspects of these platform features and associated company and press materials, I identify how news distribution and reception are shaped by elements of social media logic (van Dijck & Poell, 2013). Involving strategies designed to normalize or render neutral the role of platforms in delivering news, social media logic extends beyond platforms to permeate news institutions, users, technologies and businesses. By examining the social media logic of Facebook and Twitter’s news functionalities, it becomes possible to see how these platforms are further entrenching themselves as focal points and authorities in global flows of information.

## **Background**

From the coverage of politics (Bruns & Highfield, 2013) to catastrophes and crises (Shaw, Burgess, Crawford, & Bruns, 2013), entertainment events (Highfield, Harrington, & Bruns, 2013), as well as social movements (Korn, 2015), a large amount of research attests to social media’s role in the

contemporary news landscape. Such studies include a range of approaches, such as examining influential users who pass along news (Dubois & Gaffney, 2014), mapping large news-related discussions (Lerman & Ghosh, 2010), and tracing how news organisations have adapted to new communication technologies (Ekberg, forthcoming). While some literature identifies platform affordances as enabling news distribution, such as Twitter's hashtags and inclusion of shortened links in tweets (Bruns & Stieglitz, 2014), there is a need for increased dialogue between journalism literature and the growing body of research into platforms' sociotechnical, political, and economic dynamics. This paper is a preliminary attempt to contribute to that dialogue by bringing together a focus on social media-based news distribution with approaches from platform studies to more deeply identify how platforms influence everyday news and information exchange.

Research within platform studies is often grounded within broader views in Science and Technology Studies (STS), specifically the Social Shaping of Technology (SST). SST understands technology and users as mutually shaping the development and appropriation of new technologies (MacKenzie & Wajcman, 1985; Sismondo, 2010). Building upon this foundation, platform studies couples notions from software studies with contemporary investigations of digital platforms' architecture, business models, coding, and discourses. The software studies concept of 'technicity' as "the inherent, co-constitutive milieu of relations between the human and their technical supports, agents, supplements" (Crogan & Kennedy, 2008, p. 109) feeds into Bucher's (2012a) 'technicity of attention' as a concept that highlights platforms' governance and management of user attention through digital infrastructure. Others in platform studies have applied a critical political economy lens to examine how the profit-making values of commercial social media platforms are programmed into their architecture, rendering users' activity and posts into easily re-sellable data (Gehl, 2014; van Dijck, 2013). As Gillespie (2010) points out, although the term 'platform' has been used to elide tensions between social media's functions of community-building and profit-making, there is nothing neutral about social media software the companies that own them. Even algorithms functioning in the background of platforms are not objective but are instead tuned to increase the visibility and

salience of particular topics and people over others (Bucher, 2012b; Gillespie, 2012). By considering these platform dynamics, it becomes apparent that users and news organizations are not the only actors of importance in news exchanges on social media.

In their thought-provoking piece *Understanding Social Media Logic*, Jose van Dijck and Thomas Poell (2013) extend paradigms within platform studies by discussing the development of social media logic and its entanglement with mass media logic. Drawing on Altheide and Snow's (1979) principles, they identify mass media logic as media's discursive strategies and performative tactics that have become accepted as 'natural' or 'neutral' across institutional contexts. These tactics include presenting a continuous flow of events to retain the public's attention, selecting items conducive to this quick turnover of content, and focusing on news with a high emotional impact. Although mass media outlets present themselves as neutral, they filter content and select experts or representatives to speak on behalf of institutions and the public.

While van Dijck and Poell stress that mass media logic and social media logic emerged separately from "a different technological and economic lineage" (p. 5), they demonstrate how social media logic blends, transforms, and adds new elements to the tactics of mass media logic. Social media logic involves the "norms, strategies, mechanisms, and economies" (p. 2) involved in how social media become naturalized as part of individuals' daily routines including practices regarding news intake, information gathering, and communication more broadly. They outline four main elements of social media logic:

1. Programmability – the mutual ability of users and platforms to steer the flow of communication and information, grounded in a relationship between technology and human agency (p. 5);
2. Popularity – strategies for prioritising some topics and users over others, conditioned by algorithmic and socioeconomic components (p.6);
3. Connectivity – platforms' sociotechnical affordance for connecting content to user activities and advertisers, enabling human connectedness while pushing automated connectivity or personalization (p. 8);

4. Datafication – the rendering of social media activity into data, which can be traded as a commodity and is presented as a neutral or raw representation of popular opinion (p. 9). Datafication adds a real-time data dimension that provides the appearance of being live (p. 10).

As it becomes accepted as neutral, social media logic is increasingly distributed and driven by users, technologies, economic structures, and the institutional bodies that interact with and through platforms. In a different piece, Poell and van Dijck (2014) outline some ways in which social media shape how news organisations present news and discuss social media's influence on user interactions with news through 'liking', sharing, and commenting. They demonstrate how social media logic functions in ways that actively shape contemporary news flows by locating platforms as key mediators between users and news organisations. This paper extends their work by identifying elements of social media logic in recent and ongoing developments in platform news functionalities, particularly Facebook's Trending and Twitter's Moments. It shows how platform influence reaches beyond mediation to exert authority over what news is featured, how it is displayed, and what means users are provided with in order to access and understand the news.

### **Examining platforms' news functionalities**

Although journalists, news organizations, and users have been sharing news across social media since their debut, Facebook and Twitter have only recently expanded their news functionalities to include significant sections dedicated to this kind of information exchange. These functionalities build upon earlier features designed to alert users when a topic gains popularity over a short amount of time ("goes viral"), such as Twitter's longstanding "Trends" menu bar. In 2014, when Facebook launched the Trending section, a menu to the right of the News Feed, the company described it as a personalised way to find topics "based on things you're interested in and what is trending across Facebook overall" (Struhar, 2014). By the time the mobile functionality for Trending was announced almost a year later, its purpose had been narrowed to "[helping] people discover timely and relevant conversations about the news

that they care about” (Hsu & Song, 2014). A later update to the section in 2015 added categories including ‘all news’, politics, science and technology, sports, and entertainment (Mangalindan, 2015) (Figure 1).

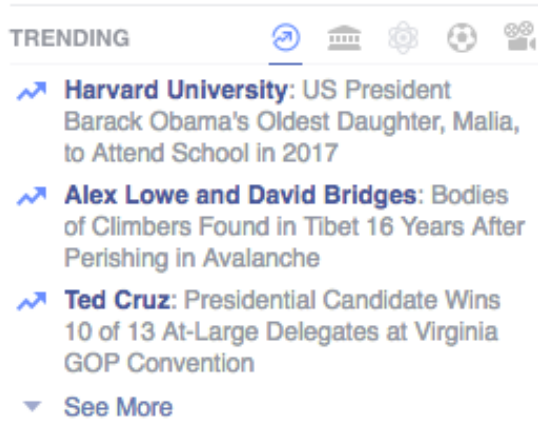


Figure 1. My Facebook Trending section on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016.

In 2015, Moments was unveiled as “the best of Twitter in an instant” (Twitter, 2015). Through the addition of a new tab with a lightening bolt icon, Twitter created this section separate from its Trends menu (Figure 2). This section also contains categories, including ‘today’, news, sports, entertainment, and fun, and further identifies subcategories for stories, such as ‘weird’, ‘haha’, ‘ICYMI’ (In Case You Missed It), ‘amazing’ and more. While news plays a large role, Moments’ mandate is broader than Facebook’s Trending. Kevin Weil, formerly responsible for product design at Twitter, was quoted as saying that Moments could be used for current events and breaking news “but also cultural events and moments – things around your location and where you are” (Honan, 2015). Moments is designed to deliver formal news stories as well as emergent platform trends (e.g. trending hashtags like #ThrowbackThursday) and ground-up events that users are discussing. However, this differentiation between formal news stories and social media activity is often false because popular hashtags and hubs of conversation on social media also frequently make it into broadcast news headlines.



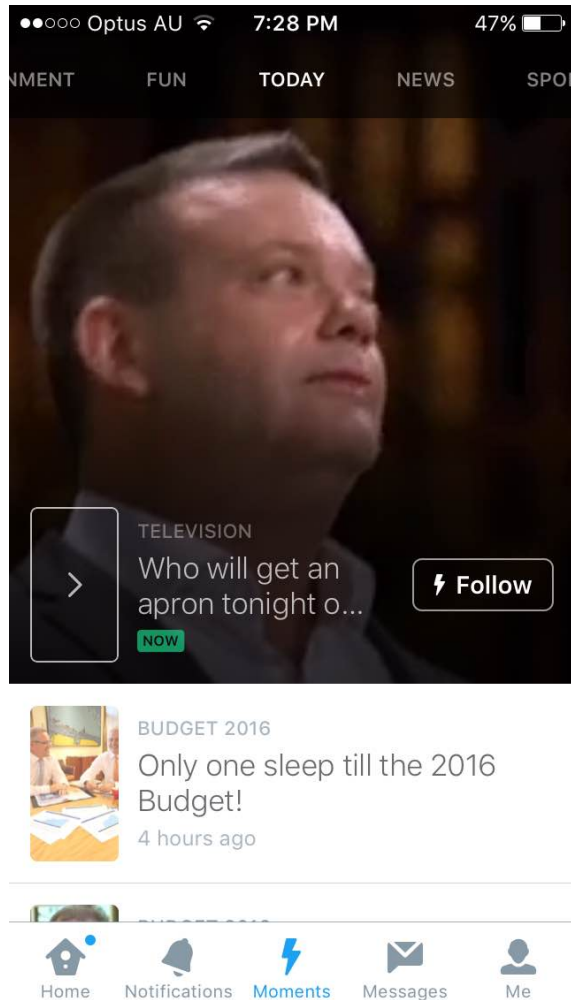


Figure 2. My Twitter Moments section on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016.

To identify elements of social media logic in these news functionalities, I applied the walkthrough method (Burgess, Light, & Duguay, 2015), which involves systematic examination of a platform's market position and vision, business model, governance, and technological architecture. I analysed these aspects specifically with regard to the Trending portion of Facebook and the Moments tab on Twitter. The first three aspects were analysed through an environmental scan of media articles, press statements, and platform documentation (e.g. terms of service, blog posts). Then I interrogated the technological architecture of Trending and Moments, applying the walkthrough method's principles of attending to the way each platform guides users in their everyday use of these functionalities. As I walked through the platforms' technical features, I recorded my findings through screenshots and detailed field

notes, identifying interface arrangements, aesthetics, content, and tone that indicated the features' underlying social media logic. Although the walkthrough method as applied here is limited by the absence of interviews with users, who could provide insights into how they use or re-appropriate platform features, it provides a starting point from which to understand how Facebook and Twitter are positioning themselves within the broader news landscape. The walkthroughs analyse platform features from early May 2016 and do not include subsequent developments or updates.

## **Findings**

The following provides an overview of aspects of Trending and Moments that indicate their perpetuation of a social media logic that affirms their role as authorities in the circulation of news. While not exhaustive, these findings demonstrate how the design and discourses of these news functionalities normalise how they steer news production, distribution, and reception.

### *Programmability*

There are multiple ways in which these platforms steer the flow of news communication but the most salient involve the curation and display of news stories for users to encounter. Twitter plainly states that “most moments are assembled by our curation team” (Muthukumar, 2015) and some are outsourced to partnering news and entertainment outlets. Moments must meet Twitter’s (2016b) guidelines and principles, which highlight that curators make decisions regarding the worthiness of topics, described as “what is relevant on the world stage or in the media.” According to the documentation, curators must also determine how to create a Moment that is “accurate”, avoids “profanity, violence and nudity...except where it is necessary to tell a newsworthy story,” and avoids bias. Although the guidelines and principles discuss this as though it is a neutral process, these content-related decisions are value-laden and subjective.

Facebook instead attempts to emphasise users’ agency in contributing to the combination of topics they are shown in Trending. Facebook’s Help Centre (2016c) describes Trending topics as “based on a number of factors including engagement, timeliness, Pages you’ve liked and your location.” Human agency

factors into curation as topics are personalised, based on one's Facebook activity, and also reflective of the aggregate activity of all Facebook users. Although this sort of collective agency is a driving force in both Moments and Trending – topics that people are talking about are elevated – the 'number of factors' involved in Facebook's Trending topics may also include commercial and promotional incentives. The algorithm giving weight to these factors remains opaque to all except Facebook.

Both Facebook and Twitter write headlines and summaries for each topic, which do not reference any particular news story. The subjective choices involved in this process are evident in critiques of Facebook for omitting mentions of Twitter from headlines having to do with its social media activity (Herman, 2016). Facebook's speculative style of describing the news - for example, adding "reports say" after the headline - has also been noted as part of the decisions it makes in presenting news to users (Dzieza, 2016). Twitter's guidelines for Moments' titles and descriptions state, "The description should be just that: descriptive of what you'll see." But actual descriptions include bias in their stylistic flair, such as, "President Obama ended his speech the only way he could have. With an epic mic drop" (Twitter, 2016a). Descriptors such as 'the only way' and 'epic' are clearly subjective. These examples demonstrate how Twitter and Facebook steer users to encounter and experience topics in a particular way through their curation and display of the news.

Aside from influencing curation algorithms, human agency features in a user's decision whether to access a Trending topic or Moment. However, neither platform has made their news functionality optional. Users' backlash against the Trending section was so great that Facebook's Help Centre (2016a) features a page dedicated to explaining that "you can't turn off trending." Instead, Facebook offers users the chance to further customize the content they see by hiding undesired headlines. However, Facebook released a clarification that users who hide "a very high number" of stories will still see some undesired content because Facebook will not "take 'hide' into account as strongly" for these individuals (Tas & Wang, 2015). Essentially, the more that users attempt to remove stories, including Trending topics, from their News Feed, the less Facebook will take into account their actions, effectively overriding human

agency. Since these limitations prevent individuals from opting out of seeing Trending topics, a quick Google search for “turn off Facebook Trending” returns many results for a browser extension allowing users to hide the section completely (Excellatronic Communications, 2016). Less user discontent with Moments is likely due to the tab requiring users to tap on it before seeing topics. Therefore, it is less salient than the ever-present Trending topics section in Facebook’s desktop version.

### *Popularity and connectivity*

Elements of popularity and connectivity were linked in my analysis, since the priority given to particular topics and people within these news functionalities was often motivated by socioeconomic connections. What each platform deems popular stems not only from user activity around a particular topic but is also connected to the algorithms determining what topics are available for widespread engagement. Gillespie (2012) writes about how algorithms are deployed with the promise of objectivity, such as when Facebook asserts that its algorithm merely functions based on conglomerated user activity or Twitter’s moments reflect stories as they unfold. However, algorithms function according to “patterns of inclusion” (Gillespie, 2012, p.168) that determine what is collected and displayed (and what is excluded) as well as the “evaluation of relevance” (p.175) according to a platform’s criteria. The decision to split Trending and Moments into particular categories of relevance, including Sports and Entertainment as stand alone sections, demonstrates platform valuations as to what is relevant. Although I am a Canadian user based in Australia (with profile details reflecting this), my feeds on both platforms elevate stories about American politics, entertainers and businesses. I have never clicked on a sports-related story and yet Moment’s ‘today’ section highlights American National Basketball Association (NBA) playoffs and Australian Football League (AFL) games. These non-personalised aspects of Trending and Moments reflect the weight given to collective conversation around particular topics as users discuss sports and American politics within a continuum in which the platform’s highlighting of these topics perpetuates discussion. These topics’ popularity is

also likely to involve platform evaluations of relevance that align with mainstream discourses glorifying American culture.

Hierarchies of popularity are also evident in the way that each platform elevates certain sources and types of content as being authoritative regarding the news. When clicking on a topic in Trending, “Top Posts” appear beneath its description and photos. These are generally posts by verified accounts from news agencies, such as CNN and BBC. Similarly, when swiping through Moments, the first tweets following the description are almost always tweets from news outlets or tweets from key players involved in the news stories, such as the Red Cross if the story is about a crisis. Often Moments are comprised entirely of tweets from news outlets, politicians, and journalists. On Facebook, if a Trending topic involves individuals who have Facebook accounts, such as Donald Trump, their latest public post relating to the story will be prominently displayed below the description. While these accounts and posts are highlighted due to their popularity, demonstrated by numerous followers and shares, relying on these metrics to structure coverage returns us to a broadcast model of news. Individuals’ perspectives are secondary, relegated to the huge volume of “Public Posts” at the bottom of a Trending page. Everyday individuals’ tweets are sometimes included toward the end of a Moment if a user has enough followers or if the tweet has gained numerous retweets. This separation of individual opinion from news authorities precludes meaningful back-and-forth discussions about a topic as it focuses individuals on authoritative opinions and buries public commentary.

Popularity involves a socioeconomic component where attention drives profits. This functions through the connectivity of social media logic as platforms secure connections between content, users, and advertisers to build profitable forms of networked sociality (van Dijck, 2013; van Dijck & Poell, 2013). From its launch, Moments was designed to have some stories assembled by partners, such as BuzzFeed, Mashable, and Fox News (Muthukumar, 2015), appearing within Moments as stories with the partner’s name above the headline. This connection between platforms and certain news outlets privileges business partners with the ability to create and assemble tweets comprising a story. Some partner Moment are compiled entirely of tweets by the business partner, such as the

Washington Post's (2016) montage of Obama's best correspondent jokes. With Moments designed for users to quickly swipe through tweets, similar to the rapid 'swipe logic' of Tinder and related apps (David & Cambre, 2016), this rapid gesture facilitates overlooking a Moment's author and their curatorial decisions.

Facebook has also implemented design features favouring news outlets that deliver through its preferred format. In 2015, Facebook rolled out "Instant articles" as a suite of interactive features for news organizations to make articles designed for Facebook instead of their own web properties (Facebook, 2016d). Although these features are now available to all publishers (Lardinois, 2016), Facebook first offered them exclusively to partners like the National Geographic, boosting the visibility of these organisations' content. More recently, Facebook (2016b) launched "Live", a feature similar to Twitter's Periscope (but contained within the Facebook platform), which allows users to broadcast live video footage. When users click a topic in Trending and newscasters are using Live to discuss the topic, Facebook highlights these streams toward the top of the page, drawing attention to the broadcasts even if they occurred several hours earlier. These are examples of how Facebook enhances the popularity of content that complies with its vision for profit-making and strengthens business partnerships with content creators.

It is also noteworthy to identify where connections are absent. Both Trending and Moments are designed to retain users on Facebook and Twitter respectively. Although news and related links are featured, if users click to these, they are displayed within the frame of each app with an easy pathway back to the main story page. If users wish to see a Moment, especially with particular tweets and content curated by news partners, they must use Twitter to view this content. Similarly, Facebook Live videos are only available through Facebook. With this content tailored to specific platforms, users are not only incentivised to receive their news through social media but they may actually be missing key content and perspectives should they choose not to access news through these platforms.

### *Datafication*

Poell and van Dijck (2014) discuss how platforms delineate ways for individuals to interact with news that are easily datafiable in the form of likes, shares, and comments. This aggregated data is then sold back to news agencies, creating a feedback loop through which breaking news is identified and amplified based on the reaction it will draw through social media. Going beyond their identification that these metrics do not actually reflect the population's reaction to news events but only represent a small portion of social media-related impact, it is notable that Facebook and Twitter both filter these metrics to news agencies in specific ways. In 2013, Facebook launched the Keyword Insights API (Constine, 2013), allowing media companies to access metrics about topics being discussed in users' public posts and later expanded to include access to data about activity within the Trending section (Constine, 2014). The developers' section of Facebook clearly specifies that "access to the Keyword Insights API is restricted to a limited set of media publishers and usage requires approval by Facebook. You cannot apply to use the API at this time" (Facebook, n.d.). Therefore, Facebook plays a direct gatekeeping role, limiting access to data to ensure that its distribution remains profitable.

Similarly, companies looking to access and analyse a significant portion of Twitter data must go through its data-selling platform, GNIP, or other approved resellers. Although news audiences have long been datafied, such as through the analysis of newscast ratings and viewership, the datafication of social media audiences' news-related activity produces granular and detailed metrics with personalised, post-demographic profiling based on users' preferences, activity, and interactions. Platforms shape the future production of news by rationing and selling this valuable data to the most lucrative partners. This allows certain news organisations to produce data-driven news based on their interpretation of these metrics, which cannot be challenged since others do not have access to the same data. Not only does this create an uneven playing field in terms of news production, but it also allows privileged partners sole access to data about news that breaks on social media, allowing them to impose bias without accountability from other news organisations.

Datafication also adds a “real-time data dimension” (van Dijck & Poell, 2013) to the notion that news is happening live. Trending and Moments both emphasise that their topics are driven by what is being talked about right now, whether it is automatically displayed through Facebook’s algorithm or derived from Twitter analytics interpreted by the Moments curation team. While the use of data to curate and distribute news topics gives the impression of liveness, this becomes illusory on the actual platforms as time is assumed rather than stated. Trending topics do not appear chronologically and are listed without any indication of their ordering logic (one assumes the top item is being ‘most discussed’ in this instant). Upon clicking on a topic, the photo and summary also do not indicate the date when they were created. Scrolling through a Trending topic, ‘top posts’ with news articles appear according to popularity (indicated by comments and shares) rather than timeliness. Photos and videos are displayed in a montage where dates are not shown unless a user clicks on them. These, along with public posts, are displayed according to some mixture of popularity and timeliness but also do not appear chronologically. Facebook Live videos broadcast hours earlier appear prominently in the “Live” section, only indicating upon further clicking how long ago they have taken place.

Twitter’s Moments also give the impression of being live but then omit details regarding timeliness. Although Moments provide a relative indication of when they were posted (e.g. three hours ago; this morning), Tweets within a Moment are included without timestamps. To see the time a tweet originated, users must tap the “...” button in the bottom right and select “View Tweet” to see the original tweet with its timestamp. The tweets in a Moment are also not in chronological order and one Moment may include tweets over several days. While Twitter’s checkmark declaring “You’re all caught up” provides an impression that a user has just received up-to-the minute news, it is difficult to know if anything has taken place subsequent to the Moment’s curation. By excluding readily visible time markers from their design, these new functionalities give the impression that social media platforms are serving up the latest breaking news when they may in fact be providing older content from preferred news partners. At the same time, more pertinent news stories could go



unrecognised if they do not garner social media attention through the appropriate metrics.

## **Conclusion**

This analysis of Facebook's Trending section and Twitter's Moments tab has made it possible to identify elements of social media logic in the way these news functionalities play a key role in arranging news content, new organisations and users in particular ways. Through programming that reflects curation-related decisions and algorithms, platforms determine which news will be presented and the interface through which it is received. Content is featured and becomes popular based not only on collective users' discussions about a topic but also on decisions around a topic's relevance. The prominence of certain news stories and outlets distributing them is also related to measures taken to build platforms' business connections with media organisations that align with a platform's profit-driven vision. Users' ability to interact with and respond to the news is delimited by platform features that aggregate activity into datafied social media metrics, which are then sold back to news organisations. Datafication makes it possible for platforms to provide the impression that their news sections contain live coverage while actually uncovering the chronology of a story proves difficult within the platform's design.

These elements of social media logic function through platform features designed to normalise social media companies' steering power within the news media landscape. Facebook and Twitter's sociotechnical arrangements set users up to accept curated content based on black-box algorithms premised on the social media logic that stories should be continuous, personalised, and live. Since social media logic extends to the institutions that come into contact with it, news organisations also accept this normalisation of platforms as news authorities. They conform to create platform-specific content and build exclusive partnerships that disempower news organisations without the capital and reputational bargaining power required to make it to the top of the news topics and to access news-related data analytics. Therefore, I wish to raise the question, are we going to accept this social media logic and the normalisation of platforms as authorities in what makes the news and how it is distributed? If so, how do we

even begin to enforce standards, such as journalistic integrity, around commercial entities that purport to simply be conveying the news without influence or bias?

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